

JACK O'JUDGMENT :-: By Edgar Wallace

Who's Who in the Story

COLONEL DAN BOUNDARY, fat, coarse-grained, but immensely clever leader of a gang of crooks, has become a member of the police force after several years of "judgment" after several years of "judgment" after several years of "judgment".

STAFFORD KING of the London Criminal Intelligence force.

PIPPO SILVA, a sleek man about town, who has attracted an actress, who forges his attention on an actress, who forges his attention on an actress.

MAIRIE WHITE, daughter of Solly White, one of the gang who wishes to retire.

LOLLIE MARSH, a doll-faced but clever girl, who acts as "dummy" of the black-bagging gang.

"SWELL" CREWE, once a gentleman, now a crook.



The charge made against you is that you have been in communication with the police; is that true?

HE ARRIVED at an unpropitious time, for the colonel was in cold fury, and the object of his wrath was Crewe, who sat with folded arms and stare fixed, looking down at the table.

"That gentleman business is played out, Crewe," stormed the colonel, "and I'm just about tired of hearing what you won't do and what you will do if I Lollie's given us away she has got to go through it."

"What use will it be, supposing she has?" said the other doggedly. "I don't for a moment believe she has done anything of the sort. But suppose she has given you away, what are you going to do? Add to the indictment? Get a few weeks ago?"

"Oh, you've been discussing it with her, have you?" And maybe you also dangerous calm. "And maybe you also and live a decent life? I remember hearing you say something of that sort a few weeks ago," said Crewe.

"We're all sick of it," said Crewe. "Look at Pinto. Do you think he's pleased?"

Pinto started.

"Why do you bring me into it?" he complained. "I'm standing by the colonel to the last. And I agree with him that we ought to know what Lollie told the police."

"She's told them nothing," said Crewe; "she isn't that kind of a girl. Besides, what does she know?"

"She knows a lot," said the colonel. "I'll put a supposition to you. Suppose she's Jack O' Judgment."

Crewe looked at him with astonishment.

"That's an absurd suggestion," he said. "How could she be?"

"I'll tell you how she could be," said the colonel. "She has never been

"A gramophone voice?"

"It sounds like a voice on a speaking machine."

The colonel nodded slowly.

"Now you come to mention it, I think you're right," he said. "It sounded familiar to me. Of course it was a gramophone voice."

They made a careful search of the apartment, taking down every book from the big shelf in one of the alcoves, and turning the leaves to discover the hidden machine. With this idea to guide them the search was more complete than it had been before. Every drawer in the desk was taken out, every scrap of furniture was minutely examined, even the massive legs of the colonel's writing table were tapped.

Crewe took no part in the search, but watched it with a slight smile of amusement, and the colonel, turning, detected this.

"What the devil are you grinning about?" he said. "Why aren't you helping, Crewe? You've got an interest in the business."

"Not such an interest that I'm going to fool around looking for a gramophone voice that goes off at appropriate intervals," said Crewe.

"Doesn't it strike you that it would have to be a pretty smart gramophone to 'chip in' at the right moment?"

The colonel pondered this a minute and then went back to his place at the table, mopping his forehead.

"Pinto's right," he said. "The fellow has smuggled some fool machine into the flat, and we shall discover it sooner or later. I don't know how he controls it, or who controls it"—he looked suspiciously at Crewe—"or who controls it," he repeated.

"You said that before," said Crewe coolly.

The colonel had something on his lips to say, but swallowed it.

"We'll meet here tonight at eleven," I told Lollie to come. Now, Crewe, he said in a more gentle tone, "you're in this up to the neck, and you've got to go through with it. After all, your life and liberty are at stake as much as ours. If Lollie's played us false we've got to be—"

"Lollie has not played you false, colonel," said Crewe. His face was very pale, the colonel noticed. "I like that girl, and—"

"So that's it?" said the colonel. "A little love romance introduced into our sordid commercial lives!"

"Maybe you know what she's been talking to Stafford King about?" Crewe did not immediately reply.

"Do you?" asked the colonel.

"I know she has been trying to get out of the country, to break with the gang, but that she has given you or any

of us away is a lie. Lollie's had a rotten life, and she's just sick of it, that's all. Do you blame her?"

"There's no question of blaming her or praising her," said the colonel patiently; "the question is whether we condemn her, or whether she still has our confidence; and that we shall know tonight. You will be present, Crewe?"

"I shall be present, you may be sure," said Crewe, and there was a look in his face which Pinto, for one, did not like.

Lollie Goes Away

It seemed to Swell Crewe that the scene was curiously reminiscent of a trial in which he had once participated. The colonel, at the end of the long table, sat aloof and apparently non-committal, a veritable judge and a merciless judge at that. Pinto sat at his right, Selby on the left, and Crewe himself sat halfway between the girl at the further end of the table, and Pinto.

he's got you sized right down to the ground! He's got you in half sizes! Tell him indeed! Why, he told me things about you that I had never heard before in my life."

Pinto went a dusky-red.

"That won't go," he said roughly; "he didn't meet you to give you information."

"Didn't he, though?" said the girl, nodding. "He told me all about the Orpheum, and the man who horse-whipped you, and—"

With an oath the other started to his feet, touched in the tenderest spot. "Dry up, Pinto," said the colonel; "we all know that story's true. But why did he tell you this, Lollie?" She hesitated.

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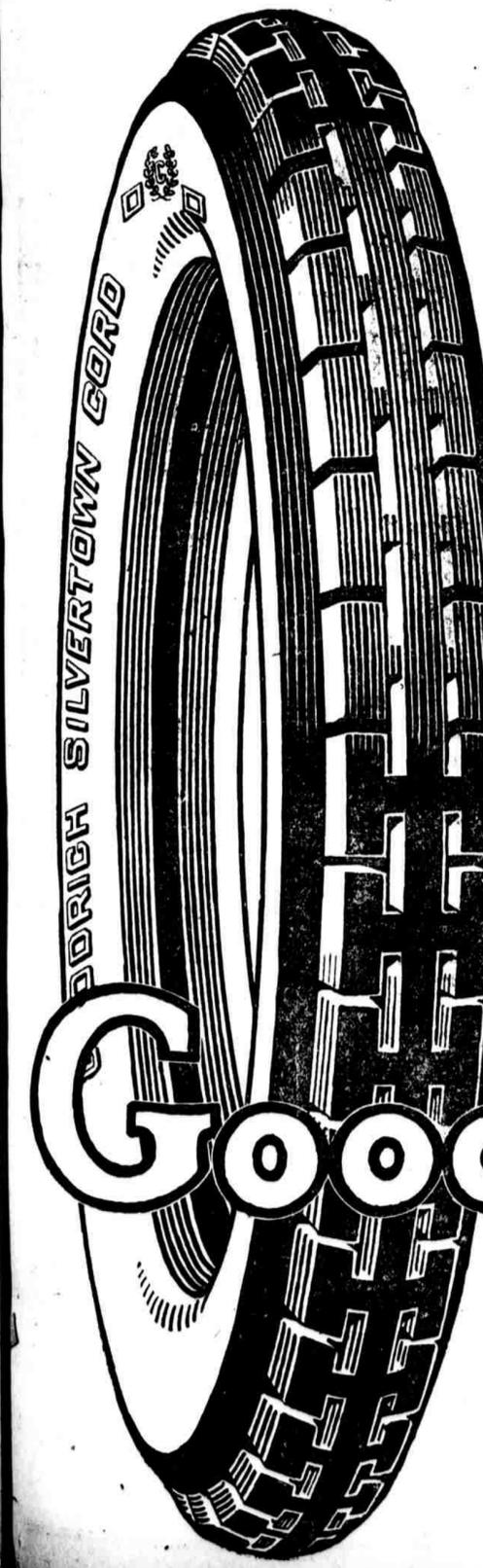
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